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## **Sarasota County Mosquito-Borne Disease Update – 8-23-11**

Local health officials remind residents that mosquito activity has increased as expected in Sarasota County as the typical summer rain pattern continues. Currently, our sentinel chicken flocks, which serve as an indicator of mosquito-borne illness in our community continue to show evidence of low levels of West Nile Virus (WNV) transmission in Sarasota County.

WNV, which has been reported in humans in Duval County (Jacksonville area), is a potentially serious illness that is most often spread by the bite from an infected mosquito.

Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes can then spread WNV to humans and other animals when they bite.

The more time you are outdoors, the more time you could be bitten by an infected mosquito. Health officials urge residents and seasonal visitors to pay attention to avoiding mosquito bites if you spend a lot of time outside, either working or playing.

Three Florida counties are currently under a mosquito advisory or alert.

Florida residents who have traveled to tropical and subtropical areas of the world where WNV, dengue fever, malaria and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is present are at increased risk of becoming infected.

According to Mosquito Management officials, the species that transmit WNV, Dengue Fever, and EEE are found readily in Sarasota County. However, health officials say that currently there are no locally acquired cases of WNV, dengue or EEE in Sarasota County. The most common mosquitoes that transmit these diseases are associated with the accumulation of water in man-made containers that serve as breeding sites. Eliminating water sources (buckets, etc.) will greatly reduce encounters with these mosquitoes. Additionally, make sure that your window screens are in good order to reduce the risk of mosquitoes feeding inside your home.

There is no vaccine to prevent these arbovirus diseases in humans. Therefore, everyone, especially travelers to areas where people are becoming infected with WNV, dengue, malaria and EEE, is urged to take these **5 D precautions**:

- **Dusk and Dawn** -- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood. For many species, this is during the dusk and dawn hours although mosquitoes can bite at other times of day. When possible, stay in facilities with screened windows and doors and air conditioning to reduce risk of mosquito bites.
- **Dress** – When outdoors and mosquitoes are present, wear clothing such as shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt to cover most of your skin. Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.
- **Deter Mosquito bites** – Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents **according to the label**. Repellents with picaridin, DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus and IR3535 are effective. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months. More information on repellents can be found at: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/ga/insect\\_repellent.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/ga/insect_repellent.htm)
- **Drainage** -- Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, including containers that hold water where mosquitoes can lay their eggs. Flush bromeliad plants with fresh water or use a larvicide (e.g. BTI granules) in the "tank" of the bromeliads to limit mosquito development.

For information on how to reduce mosquito-breeding sites around your home or to report a mosquito problem, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit the Sarasota County Health Department's (SCHD) website, [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org).

Healthcare providers and others with health-related questions can call the SCHD at 941-861-2837.

For information about mosquito-borne diseases, visit the Florida Department of Health website, <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html>.

For more information about travelers and dengue from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/travelOutbreaks/index.html>.